



# *How To* **COMMUNICATE WITH THE MEDIA**

Macedonian institute for media









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# INTRODUCTION

## ► How to communicate with the media

If you are part of a group that is just starting to contact the media or your regular work requires you to communicate with the media then this handbook will help you to simply, efficiently and professionally compose and deliver your message. You can use it whether your goal is to inform the public about your activities, to promote plans that you have scheduled, to demonstrate transparency in your work or to make a contribution in the resolving of certain issues of public interest.

Knowing some principles for successful communication with the media will help you better organize your work, and will help journalists precisely present your message to the public, without much effort and waste of time.

The material included in this handbook represents a systematic review of what is most important from all seminars, workshops and trainings organized on this topic by the Macedonian Institute for Media for non-governmental organizations, local self-government units, spokespersons and youth of political parties.

It explains some basic principles for development of a media strategy, instruments for communication with the media, and methods for monitoring and assess of your media coverage. You will also find other useful information that will make communication with the media easy for you.

Keep this handbook in your closest drawer or on your desk. Let it be constantly within your reach and consult it often. Remember there is no need to be afraid of the media. In fact, the media can be an important ally on your road to success.

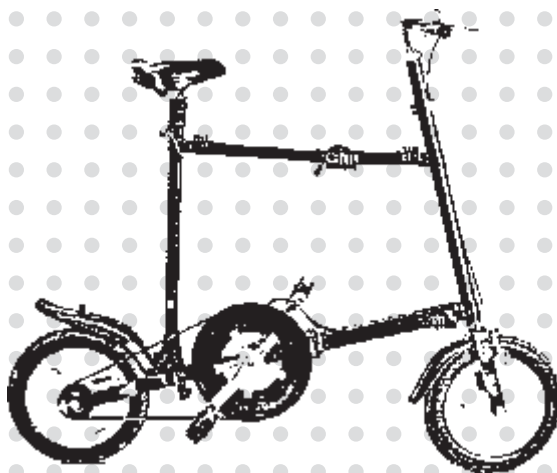
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Macedonian Institute for Media

## Getting Started

- [1] Media Strategy
- [2] Point People And Resources
- [3] Message Development

Case study: Getting the community INVOLVED







# Media Strategy

[1]

If you want to have long-term and successful media relations, then your first and main responsibility is to work on creating a media strategy. In outlining the elements of a successful media strategy it is important to establish the overall goals and outcomes that support your organization's mission and vision. Once developed the media strategy should be continuously updated. There are five basic steps to creating a media strategy:

1. Decide what will be the purpose of dealing with the media for your organization.
2. Outline your goal, what you want to achieve through your media relations, and identify the objectives you will have to fulfill to get there.
3. Determine who, within your organization, will be responsible for carrying out the strategy and updating it.
4. Calculate what resources in terms of staff and equipment you can make available and what your additional needs will be;
5. Identify key indicators that can be measured against your objectives to determine the effectiveness of your strategy implementation.

Developing a media strategy is usually an interactive process that includes several members or leaders of an organization. It may be done for the organization as a whole, or for particular projects or phases of an organization's work. The media strategy is a tool that can be referred to at any time, and should always be considered before interaction with the media.



### Example 1

Goals and Objectives	Measures of Success	Resources
<p><b>Goal: Increase the visibility of the organization proactive public relations</b></p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b> Establish and maintain media contacts with relevant local and national media</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> Increase the amount of media coverage for the activities of the organization</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of media outlets represented by journalists at the organization's events.</li> <li>2. The number of items in the organization's clippings file of media coverage.</li> <li>3. Survey research on public recognition of the organization and its work.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Responsible personnel:</b> The media office consisting of the media coordinator, the spokesperson and the writer will be responsible for managing and implementing the strategy and will report to the Director.</p> <p><b>Financial Resources:</b> The Media Office will be allocated an annual budget of 3,000 euros and will have the part time use of one vehicle belonging to the organization.</p>

### Example 2

Goals and Objectives	Measures of Success	Resources
<p><b>Goal: Use media to promote the use of recycled materials</b></p> <p><b>Objective 1:</b> Increase the amount of information in the media about recycled products and the benefits of recycling</p> <p><b>Objective 2:</b> Engage journalists in advocating for the use of recycled products through positive coverage of the topic.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of items in your clipping file on the topic of recycling and the ratio of positive to negative stories</li> <li>2. A public survey or focus group study that researches how informed people are on recycling before and after implementation of the strategy</li> </ol>	<p><b>Responsible personnel:</b> The media office consisting of the media coordinator and the spokesperson will be responsible for implementing the strategy and will report to the Board of Directors</p> <p><b>Financial Resources:</b> The current budget for the project is 2,300 euros, but it is expected that the media office will have to raise an additional 5,000 euros to implement the strategy.</p>



# Point People And Resources

Enough cannot be said about the participation of your organization's top people when developing media strategies. At the same time, when defining your organization's strategy, media outreach should be an integral part of the planning.

## ► The Media Team

A good, solid, media team includes three important roles: a media coordinator, a writer and spokesperson. Each is also independently vital to the process of effective media management. Roles may overlap and often can be handled by the same person, but each area of responsibility must be covered.

### The Media Coordinator

The media coordinator must be someone who is sociable, can concisely articulate the issues and is willing to spend a great deal of time on the telephone. This person makes sure press releases go out on time, keeps media lists updated, makes press calls and works actively behind the scenes during events.

At an event the media coordinator ensures that all press people receive a statement or handout, that all those present are acknowledged, that all props and sound equipment are in place, that one-on-one interview requests are satisfied, that the photo opportunity is the one that was planned beforehand (i.e. that the right people are standing in the right place, etc.) and that the event runs smoothly.

The media coordinator also prepares your spokespeople and others from your organization on recent media coverage as well as briefs them prior to any interviews explaining what is of interest to the media and how it relates to your organization's communications goals.



## The spokesperson

You may choose to have one spokesperson who is thoroughly knowledgeable on all the details of your issue, or you may choose to have several spokespeople who are experts in different subjects in which your organization is involved. If you want to learn to be a good spokesperson, spend time listening to others who are good at the job. Research your issue until you know it thoroughly and can hold your own in a conversation or debate. Think through each question that you are likely to be asked and consider carefully the possible responses. Always be ready to revise and refine. You always have more to learn.

### A good spokesperson must have the following qualities:

- ▶ In-depth knowledge on the issue and your organization;
- ▶ Be a good listener and intuitive enough to know when a reporter is being confrontational so as not to be caught off guard;
- ▶ A high level of comfort talking to reporters and is not afraid to be on camera or on the air live;
- ▶ Familiar with the individual reporters that cover that topic or region and their reputations;
- ▶ A willingness to take time out of their schedule to talk with reporters;
- ▶ Dresses and acts presentably.



## The writer

The writer creates the story for all your press events. Clear, concise, effective writing is essential. Just because someone is articulate does not mean he/she can write. Have a good editor available to “tighten up” news releases, background briefings, and informational materials. Everything that is written and released must reflect accurately the position of your organization. Make sure more than one set of eyes from the media team reviews what goes out.

## ▶ Getting your resources together

When setting up a communications office in your organization you should, ideally, have on hand certain resources including: a telephone with a direct line, a computer, an internet connection, a fax machine, copy machine, file cabinets, a television, radio, a video recorder, a tape recorder, blank video and audio tapes, floppies, CDs, etc.

It is necessary for the media relations effort to have a media database, preferably on the **computer**, which lists the current names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, web pages, and any other suitable information of all news media that can appropriately be called upon to publish or broadcast news of your organization and its activities. News media entries on the database should have the reporter's name, the media outlet



name, the office address, direct telephone, general telephone, fax numbers, the reporter's mobile phone number and email address. The entry must be classified by type of media and any other information such as deadlines. The database should be updated at least twice a year. If possible, it is useful to keep track of ongoing communication with journalists, including a record of actual interviews, summaries of coverage of your organization, dates of publication or broadcasts, etc.

Not only must you keep track of journalists, their phone numbers, fax numbers, addresses and interests, you must **keep track of the work you are doing and planning**. Each time you begin a new project, put all related paperwork - memos, notes, photos, draft media plans, related news articles, reading material etc. - into one file folder. Label the folder clearly in case an unexpected interview arises and others need to find it in your absence. Your filing system should be clear, concise and efficient so that you can access it quickly if you need to respond to media inquiries.

Here are some things you should have on hand to do your media relations work:



- ▶ **Attractive and effective letterhead.** It must include: your logo, the organization's full official name, telephone number, fax number and address. Also a short motto or slogan of your organization, if such is developed.
- ▶ **Banners:** You can create a name/logo banner that can be placed behind a speaker at a press conference, so that it will appear in every picture.
- ▶ **Business cards:** You need business cards with your name, title, address, direct office line, fax number, email address, mobile phone number, and web page if you have one.
- ▶ **Press kit/media guide:** you should have available at all times a standard set of materials that can be sent to reporters regardless of the story they are writing. This press kit includes important information about your organization. Include your name, an informational brochure, a list of spokespeople and their areas of expertise, positive press clips, editorials and opinion pieces. Include copies of recent reports, surveys, or press releases issued by your organization. Make sure your name, title and direct telephone line are included.
- ▶ **Photographs/Videos:** If possible, include photographs of your organization's leadership, and/or photos of projects, events, and people. This helps a print publication in case they do not have the ability to send their own photographers to your event. The same applies for television: if you have video footage available, provide a copy to media and they may just run it.

## ► Budgets and Funding

Funding is a critical element of effective and successful communications. You should have a well-planned budget for developing your communications needs. A budget is something that is planned in advance, not at the last minute. Evaluate what resources you already have at your disposal, both in terms of budgetary resources as well as capital resources such as vehicles, equipment, phone lines etc. If you have the ability to raise more money you can make your budget according to your media plan and raise the money needed to implement it. Otherwise the media plan will have to be limited by the budget available. (See media plan page 18) Many of the tools and activities for building successful media relations are inexpensive, so there is a great deal that can be done on a small budget.



# Message Development



You need to be able to tell journalists and through them the general public what your organization stands for and does in no more than three lines, and in words that anybody can understand. When beginning message development the first thing to consider is why you are creating this message and what you want to achieve with it. This information comes directly from your organization's media strategy. The strategy will determine if your message advocates, explains, promotes or alarms. Depending on your strategy you may create a only single message for your organization, or you also may create different messages for different programs or departments within your organization.

But how do you define your message? Consider the points below.

## ► Research

An organization that communicates effectively has strategic, long-range plans for relaying information to a variety of audiences. The messages you develop must answer the questions why, why care and why act. You need to learn how your issues relate to prevailing public opinion and values. Understanding how your issue is perceived by the public will help you articulate your message and frame the debate.

The more your message reflects your community's positive core values, the more likely it is that public attitudes towards that initiative will be favorable. What is important is to be aware of the possibility that what we think is important to the public isn't always so. One of the most valuable tools in the development of a message is communications research. If you don't have this information you are just guessing. If you guess, chances are that what is important to you and your partners doesn't resonate with the media or with the public. Public opinion research answers the five W's:



- ▶ To **whom** are the media and public least/most likely to listen? This helps you select the appropriate spokesperson.
- ▶ **What** are the issues that concern them and the positions you should take to sway them toward your side?
- ▶ **When** are they likely to be most influenced or motivated to act?
- ▶ **Where** is your audience and how do they get their information?
- ▶ **Why** do they like, dislike or remain uncertain about specific issues or organizations?

Depending on your budget, answers to these questions can be found through informal focus group discussions, rapid surveys, or comprehensive surveys of public opinion.

It is also important to follow up delivery of messages with an evaluation of the effectiveness of the communication techniques employed, to find out:

- ▶ Who received the message?
- ▶ Was the message delivered accurately using the appropriate medium?
- ▶ Did the message have the desired impact (did it change people's attitudes or behavior)?
- ▶ What more effective methods could be employed next time?

Evaluation tools should be incorporated into your media plan from the beginning. Simple things like monitoring press clippings can give you the information you need to tell you how much coverage your issue or your organization is receiving and how often and whether the coverage is accurate, positive or negative. Or for more timely information at special events, you can hand out questionnaires in order to get immediate feedback from participants.

## ▶ **Target groups**

Many communication efforts fail because they target everyone. In reality, most outreach strategies should target a specific group of people. Make sure you can define the allies you need so that you can focus message, resources and strategy. These potential allies are the basis for your target groups, the people to whom you want to appeal. Carefully consider the "audiences" you need to reach. Targeting also influences the messages you develop and determines your choice of media outlets.







## 1. Name your “wish list”

If you could convince 130 people to embrace your message today, who would they be? Why? What can they do for you? What do they think about your issue now? What are the key things they need to believe to help you? Focus on influencing this target audience.

## 2. Find the “friend of a friend”

Who will your target audience listen to? Where does your target audience get their information? By whom is your target group most influenced? Where does the target audience get their information? Where can you reach them? Who influences the people that influence your target audience? Where do they get their information? And so on.

## 3. Draw your target circle

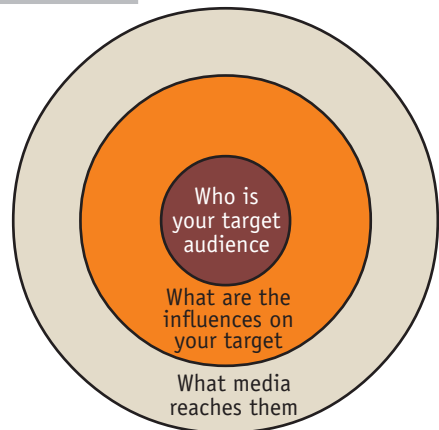
Do not begin your outreach efforts until you can accurately draw some target circles of influence around your target audience. Your target group is in the center. How do you describe them? What is the message they need to understand? What is the action they need to take? Each ring around the circle symbolizes an audience that can help you reach the target audience.

## 4. Reach into the circle

An effective communication strategy will reach your target audience. Be direct. Never use the media if a meeting with your audience will work better.

## 5. Message volume

Use the target circles to draft your strategy to move your message into the center as often as necessary to create change. Use multiple strategies to assure your message gets to the target. Don't overdo it.



## 6. Create feedback loops

Test the accuracy and effectiveness of your message and its delivery by asking friendly members of each “ring” what they are hearing? Do they understand your message? Will your target audience?

### ► Testing

The job of media professionals is to test and challenge the information they receive from you. They are not there to do your bidding; their task is to decide whether or not your message is worth passing on. That means you have to overcome their ignorance (or prejudice) and be prepared to answer any challenges they put to the “experts” to test the validity of your message. They will want to know just how reliable your evidence is. If you want to come up with as much reliable information as possible then there are certain “rules” you need to follow. If you want your message to pass the “test” keep an eye on the following rules of thumb:

- *Rule 1:* Have one main message with up to three underlying themes to support it.
- *Rule 2:* All messages should support the organization’s main goals.
- *Rule 3:* Messages are not necessarily sound bites, they are the ideas you are trying to communicate to the public (messages are reinforced by sound bites, phrases, statistics, anecdotes).
- *Rule 4:* Messages don’t change frequently. For messages to have impact they have to be repeated over and over again.
- *Rule 5:* Messages can be tailored for specific audiences, while still remaining constant.
- *Rule 6:* Consistent messages should pass through all of your communication efforts, not just when you contact the media.
- *Rule 7:* Messages must be simple. They are ideas that can be explained in a sentence or two - if it requires a paragraph or two, keep working.
- *Rule 8:* Remember: messages take time to create. Don’t rush the process.
- *Rule 9:* Repeat, repeat, repeat your message.

**Your messages should not always be delivered by you. So consider different voices and different spokespeople from both inside and outside your organization. Third party validation – professionals or experts in the field or people who have been affected by your work – can provide credibility to your cause and be the voice that others believe and hear.**

## ► **Manage your message**

Once you have carefully developed your message, “message development” helps ensure that everything your organization and its staff does or says reflects that message. Events, interviews, written materials, etc. should all somehow convey and reinforce the organization’s message. Proper message management means that you will never be lead “off message” i.e. when you do or say something that does not support the themes that your message set up. This often happens in the media when an issue that is similar to yours is more popular.

# Media Plan

[4]



The media plan will serve as the detailed action plan for how to achieve the goals and objectives in the media strategy and communicate your organization's message. Your target audience has already been identified during the message development process. In developing the media plan you will determine which tools for engaging the media are most appropriate for reaching your target audience based on the objectives in your organization's strategy, the resources available, and the message. The individual tools are described in more detail in the following chapters.

## ► Steps

1. Research what kinds of media programs or publications are most popular with your target audience. Such information is available from market research companies and often advertising agencies. If you define clearly your target audience they can tell you exactly what media you need to engage in order to reach that group.
2. Choose a variety of tools that will reach a variety of types of media identified by your research. Some tools will get you coverage in the evening news or the front page, but it is important also to use those that will get you on human interest or cultural programs or in the feature pages so that your audiences develop a relationship with your organization.
3. Schedule which media relations tools you will use when. Think about what other activities you are planning that can be tied into media events. If you can't plan exactly when you will implement certain media activities, at least try to determine in which order you will use them. Many things can be done simultaneously, so don't limit yourselves.
4. Include the steps you will take to measure the impact of your media plan. Decide when in the course of your plan you will include any surveys or other research. Refer back to the measures of success that you included in your organization's media strategy.

### Targeting Tools

#### Making headline news:



- Press releases
- Press conferences
- Media events

#### Getting in-depth features:

- Press briefings
- Press tours
- Pitch Letters

#### Building audience relationship:

- Interviews
- Media events (cultural, sport etc.)
- Press tours



## Case study:

# Getting the community INVOLVED

## ► The Media Challenge

Ekomok is a local non-governmental organization in the city of Milenovo, which is a city of about 180,000 people. The city has a medium sized river flowing through the center of it and is famous for its ornate bridges, several of which date back to the early Ottoman period. Ekomok is a group of young people, high school and university students and the organization has existed for almost two years. Until now they have done small projects like rehabilitating a park in the center of town and organizing an earth day concert of local bands. They have wanted for a long time to do something about the river, which is always full of garbage and looks very unappealing. Their parents all remember a day when one could swim in the river, but that was a long time ago. They have done some research into people's habits, by stationing members of their group along the river banks. They observed that most of the garbage that gets thrown into the river comes from townspeople walking nearby the river and from people in the villages upstream from the town who throw their household waste into the river because they do not have municipal garbage collection services.

They put together their research and got a small grant to do a campaign to clean up the river. Milenovo has two local television stations, one public radio station and several private radio stations, as well as a weekly newspaper that used to be state sponsored and has now been private for several years.

## ► The response to the media challenge

### Objective

Their objective is to get the local government structure and the residents of Milenovo involved in cleaning up the river and changing behavior so that it stays clean.

### Target

This group has several different target groups. The first is the municipal government institutions. The second is the urban population of the town and the third is the population of the villages along the river north of the town.



## Message

The main message that Ekomok wants to communicate is that the people of Milenovo and the surrounding villages must take responsibility for keeping the river clean. They have two messages that fit within the larger one. One is directed at the municipality and that is that the villages along the river should get municipal garbage collection. The other is that the people of the town must stop throwing things in the river. These two messages are designed for the different target groups that they have identified, but are tied together by the overall message.



## Tools

Because Ekomok has only a small budget to work with, they have to choose media relations tools that will not cost them much money. However they do have a pretty committed group of approximately twenty volunteers that can be engaged in activities that require a lot of people. They chose several different tools based on the different messages and their three main target groups.



**Press Conference:** Ekomok's first move is to hold a press conference to announce the start of their campaign and to present the results of their research. They choose to hold the press conference on the banks of the river near one of the old footbridges. They make a large banner to hang from the bridge and prepare press kits for the journalists attending that include a report from their research, an information page about their organization and the campaign, a plastic garbage bag and a pair of rubber gloves. They follow the press conference with a clean up action that includes their volunteers and invites the journalists to join them.

**Letters to the editor:** Because one of Ekomok's strengths is their group of volunteers they begin to write letters to the editor of the weekly newspaper. Their letters focus on urging the municipality to expand garbage collection and encouraging people to stop throwing things in the river. The volunteers make individual visits to some respected members of the community such as professors, the director of the hospital, leaders of the business community and ask them to write letters as well. They prepare some points and an information page for each of these influential individuals with a slightly different focus, for instance, health effects of the pollution, benefit to business development if the banks of the river are clean and useable for cafes or leisure activities.

**Press Briefing:** Ekomok invites the Mayor of Milenovo and the director of municipal sanitation to an informal briefing with selected local journalists who have been following their campaign. The purpose of the briefing is to discuss the options for expanding the municipal garbage collection to the villages along the river, without the pressure of cameras and microphones. They bring in an independent moderator, a biology teacher from the local high school and set a clear agenda for the discussion. The agenda includes a report from the municipality on what is currently covered, a discussion of



what kind of resources would be necessary to expand the garbage collection and what could be done then to raise the awareness of the people in the villages.

## ► Analysis of the response

### What was their challenge?

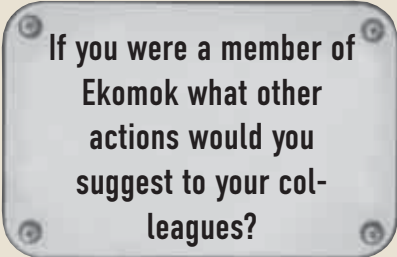
This group faced several challenges, the first one being to attract attention and gain credibility. As their members are mostly young people and their group is relatively young they will have to continue working hard to get the media to take them seriously. Another challenge was the fact that they had different target groups and a slightly complex message. Although their campaign may have been effective, it might have been easier to concentrate one at a time on the two secondary messages they came up with. They were also limited by their small budget, however they managed to overcome their limitations by choosing creative and inexpensive media relations tools.

### What did they do right?

This group chose some very effective and inexpensive methods of getting press attention or using the media. The press conference was a good way to kick off the campaign and the press briefing was a good way to approach the problem together with the municipality without creating an adversarial climate. The press briefing was also a good way for Ekomok to build relationships with particular journalists who can then continue to report on the ecological issues in the city.

### What else could they have done?

After the first press conference, Ekomok may have lost some momentum with the electronic media on the issue of getting residents to stop throwing things in the river, because after that did no more events in front of cameras and microphones. They may have considered doing another cleanup action and issuing a press release to the electronic media inviting residents to join them. Another thing they could have tried was to get some of their members onto television talk shows as guests or interviewees. The more interviews the group has beyond the statements at the press conference the more people will recognize the campaign as a long lasting process and the group as a serious force in the community.



**If you were a member of Ekomok what other actions would you suggest to your colleagues?**

## ► Implementing your media plan

No matter which tools you choose to include the best route into the media is by getting to know journalists. A steady and reliable relationship can only be developed through regular meetings and phone conversations.

### A few tips to remember include:

- **Survey the media and identify who follows your issue, build your media database around such journalists.**
- **Don't just wait for reporters to call you, because it rarely happens.** Identify someone whose work has impressed you - call their office and congratulate them. This is such a rare occurrence that they are certain to be pleased that you have taken the first step to get in touch. If you have a story to tell them, even better.
- **Establish and maintain regular communications.** Give them story ideas and help them cover the stories.
- **Provide them with quality information.** Keep it short, most journalists are getting a lot of paper every day. Remember: be a good source!
- **Show interest in their work.** Ask about the deadlines of the publications or programs on which they work. Don't view your media relations job as the task of getting something from the editors and reporters; your function is actually to help them do their jobs.
- **Help them frame your issues** in a way they can convince their editors that your story is important. Even though you and the journalist think the story is interesting, there is a lot of news to compete with! Keep an eye on what is going on in the media, be able to relate your issue with other ongoing discussions and stories.
- **Answer their questions immediately.** Journalists have deadlines and they will most probably call you half an hour before they pass the deadline. If you are not prepared to answer to their questions in the moment, ask for few minutes to organize yourself and call them back with ready information.
- **Avoid saying "I don't know".** On the other hand admit that you do not have such information at the moment and tell the journalist you will get back to them. Make sure you DO get back to them with an answer.
- **Honor your promises.** If you've promised a story exclusively to one media organization respect that promise and stick to the schedules agreed upon with that media organization.
- **Be specific.** When you talk to a reporter, be prepared with supporting facts, names and details. You need to be organized in case the reporter wants to follow up on any story or facts you present. Be specific in regards to your story.
- **Off the Record.** There is no such thing as "off the record," and you should always be on message when talking to reporters.



## ► Understanding media - from the journalists point of view

Reporters try to generate news and write stories that they believe will interest a mass audience. So should you. Just because your organization is doing wonderful things, they are not automatically newsworthy. Packaging can make a big difference in whether your story intrigues or gets thrown out. Your most important asset - especially if your budget is limited - is imagination. You should give a special angle to your story, so that it can attract media attention. Emphasize any quality in your story that marks it as unusual or out of the ordinary.

**But, you also have to focus on the following qualities:**



- **Timely information:** Make sure your information is of current interest to the public.
- **Local interest:** Be sure that the story you are telling matters to the newspaper, radio or television station's audience. Localize the story you are telling to increase its meaning and significance to the audience.
- **Human interest:** Seek out an emotional element in your story or the universal truth that your story can tell to move your audience.
- **Conflict:** reporters are eager to cover stories in which there is inherent conflict; where there are conflicting parties, or when there is a solution to a long-standing conflict.
- **Celebrity:** the public has a certain fascination for people and things that are famous. Never underestimate the compelling power of celebrities.
- **Credibility:** reporters are especially concerned about the credibility of the sources they rely on for story ideas. Make sure that your information is absolutely accurate and that independent sources can confirm its reliability.

**Understanding deadlines.** The best way to start any phone conversation with a reporter is to introduce yourself and ask the following question "Do you have a couple of minutes to talk or are you on deadline?" If, they say they are busy or on deadline, ask them when it is a better time to call back and then get off the phone politely and quickly. Generally, it is best to call reporters before noon or one o'clock. Avoid contacting reporters at 5:00 or 6:00 in the evening, unless you are returning their urgent call.

# I

## Tools

- [1] Press release
- [2] Press conference
- [3] Press briefings
- [4] Press tours

CASE STUDY:  
Making your work VISIBLE

- [5] Interviews
- [6] Pitch letter
- [7] Media Events
- [8] Other





# Press release



[1]

Press releases are one of the most commonly used forms of communicating with the media. The aim is to deliver a message to the media and enable the media to transmit it to the public. A good press release uses facts, statistics, and quotes, but first of all has a newsworthy and timely **story**.

## The press release can:



- ▶ Announce something that is going to happen soon, like an opening ceremony, or special event;
- ▶ Inform media about the start or end of a campaign, project or program;
- ▶ Promote the results of a survey;
- ▶ Present something new about an event that has already happened;
- ▶ Provide information about anything else that you think the public should know.

There are different types of press releases depending on what your goals are. A press release may present an attitude about a certain issue, position, or opinion. It could also promote an important upcoming event. It may contain predictions about further development of the organization and the development of its work. If necessary, it might be used to deny something. Press releases as a form of communication might be used as a regular way to contact the media, or as a part of campaign, which would involve interviews, publishing data, organizing press conferences, exhibitions and other events.

A press release should be factual, timely, and include newsworthy information. Make sure you know who to send the press release to and make sure you indicate your organization's contact person and telephone number on the release.

## A press release will be ignored if:



- ▶ It looks like a general promotional brochure.
- ▶ It has lots of data and no specific story.
- ▶ The media you send it to is not appropriate for the type of story.

## ▶ How to write a press release:

### A press release must include:

**Who?** The subject of the story must be identified and described.

**What?** The topic or event being covered must be made clear.

**When?** The date, day and time of any included event that happened or is being announced should be clear.

**Why?** The reason that the story or event is significant must be explained.

**Where?** The location of the event or incident should be noted along with how to get there.

**Contacts!** Include telephone numbers, faxes, e-mails, and a contact name from your organization.

### Structure of a press release:

**Headline:** Press releases should be short and informative. The headline is the opportunity to catch the attention of the media. But, to do that properly you need time to think through specifically how this headline reinforces your message. Imagine your headline on the front page of your local newspaper!

**Lead:** The most important facts should be put in the first paragraph or so called lead. The lead contains the answers to who, what, when, why and where and should be written in just a few short sentences.

#### How not to write a lead:

The Buenavistica Municipality is sending this press release to inform you about the press conference that will take place early this afternoon in City Hall. It is expected that the mayor will speak about the recent problems with the water supply following the last night's pollution incident. Drinking water will be delivered this morning from 8.00 to 10.00 by ten trucks, which is enough for the need of citizens for today.

#### How to write a lead:

Drinking water will be delivered today at Rancevo city, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The Buenavistica Municipality will provide ten trucks with drinking water that will be enough for the need of all citizens for one day. The problems are being resolved. All of the details will be presented by the mayor at a press conference in City Hall at 2 p.m. today.

**Body:** The most important details, even if they happened last should be put first. Details that are least important to the event should be placed towards the end of the story. That gives the editors opportunity to cut out the background data if necessary without losing precious time when preparing the news and keeping their deadlines.

**Tag Line:** Always provide a short summary of your mission statement or tag line that gives the key background on your organization, and which could also include an overall summary of your project, the number of people, funding involved, and information about your partners. The tag line can be incorporated into the body of the press release to help explain your organization's involvement.

**Contact Information:** Remember to include the name and phone number of your spokesperson or media coordinator. Place this information at the bottom of the page of your press release across from your organization's logo and make sure it is found on each page of the release (in case the pages get mixed up in the fax machine).

**NOTE:**

You should always check to ensure the press release has reached the media. Make a phone call and if it hasn't been delivered send a copy at once.

**Photos:** If available, you can use photographs to illustrate your news item, or inform media that photographs are available for their use.

## ► Distribution

While you are writing your press release you need to define your target media as well as specific journalists by name to which you can distribute the release. Know their deadlines and give yourself enough time to follow up by phone on the information you have sent by fax or email. In Macedonia it is best to get a press release in the hands of the journalists before 13:00.

If your press release is a response or clarification to erroneous reporting, call the media and let them know you are sending the release so that they can deliver it as quickly as possible to the editor or journalist in charge of the story.

If you have a website, post your news release as quickly as possible and in a prominent place.

## **REGIONAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP CAMP**

**Vojdan Cernodrinski 2A, Skopje, Macedonia**

**TEL/FAX: +389 2 111 111**

**E-mail: [greencity@macedonia.mk](mailto:greencity@macedonia.mk)**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Regional Democratic Leadership Camp Prepares Youth for Nation Building**

On Thursday, July 3, 2003, the Director of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, Mr. David Taylor, and USAID Acting Mission Director, Ms. Alfreda Brewer, will join 60 high school students in Kriva Palanka in running a mock municipality called Green City.

In this third regional democratic leadership camp, the non-governmental organization, Friends of Macedonia, is engaging youth from 10 municipalities in eastern Macedonia in a simulation exercise about local governance. Participants learn about representative democracy and participatory decision-making by managing the basic structures of local government. In a multi-ethnic learning environment, youth learn the benefits of tolerance and diversity.

Friends of Macedonia is using the occasion of the third camp to promote the participatory learning exercise as a model for municipalities around Macedonia to educate and engage youth in shaping Macedonia's future.

A total of 180 youth have participated in three camps since August 2002 with support from the US Government-funded Confidence Building Initiative (CBI), which is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Regional Agency for Development-Kriva Palanka and the municipality of Kriva Palanka have also provided key support to ensure the success of the camps and to offer youth a stake in the future of Macedonia.

For additional informations please contact the office of the Regional democratic leadership camp on phone: 02/ 999 999 or e-mail: [greencity@macedonia.com](mailto:greencity@macedonia.com)

Contact person: Zvonko Gelev

Mobile phone no: 070 / 999 999

e-mail: [zvonko@greencity.com](mailto:zvonko@greencity.com)

**TIPS:**

- ▶ Limit the press release to one page (30 lines). Shorter is even better.
- ▶ Use short sentences, if possible not more than 20 words.
- ▶ If you mention a person you should give the entire name, surname, title, and some additional data from their CV.
- ▶ Have in mind that the press release is not addressed only to one target group, but for a wider audience.
- ▶ When referring to organizations or institutions, first write the whole name and put the acronym in brackets; then use only the acronym in the rest of the text.
- ▶ Avoid an academic style or foreign words that are not known. It is best when using foreign words or specific terminology to describe what the words or terms mean.
- ▶ Don't forget the five "Ws" rule.
- ▶ Place the most important point first not last.
- ▶ Don't start with explanations about the organization, the work of it and so on. Save that for your tag line / closing paragraph.
- ▶ At least one day before you are planning to send a press release to the media you should plan what the press release will look like and what the content will be.
- ▶ If your story has a strong visual element, say when, where and what type of photos can be taken.



# Press Conferences

One of the most common ways to promote your news and activities is organizing and holding press conferences. But, press conferences should be organized only if you have something unique and important to communicate, something new to tell, a new report or quick response to a breaking news story, and you don't have the time to reach the media one-on-one.

Using press conferences as a communication link with the public is simple, cheap and very efficient. They will give you the opportunity to answer reporters' questions and speak openly about crucial topics and events. Make sure the news you have to convey is articulated precisely and in an interesting way ... remember to imagine what you would like to see on TV or as a quote in the newspaper. Do not limit your interaction with the media to this format of communication.

Make sure you prepare the press conference well and prepare your spokespeople for unexpected questions, which could appear from journalists. If there are mistakes or unpredictable situations during the press conference, they can easily become the key topic and headline for the news. That is something that you never want to happen. So, use the golden rule and always be best prepared.

## ► How to organize a press conference:

Before you organize a press conference, think about if it is really necessary to call a press conference or if it is more appropriate to deliver a statement by a press release followed up by telephone calls. Once you decide to organize a press conference you should think about the content: who is going to speak, what is going to be said, and how long it will last. You must also consider that the format is important: where the conference will take place; how many media organizations will be invited and how it will be organized.

But do remember: a press conference should not resemble a lecture. Depending on the number of speakers, limit their presentations to a reasonable amount of time leaving enough time for questions and answers with journalists. If necessary, provide translation and create your press release and other materials in more than one language as appropriate for your audience. This can include various local languages and international languages if you have foreign guests or press.





## Location

Depending on what you have to announce, your office location and your budget, try to choose a location that is easily accessible for the media. Your office can be appropriate if space allows. Or consider a press club or pressroom of a government building or even a room of an hotel in the center of the city. The room should be big enough to hold 20 percent more than the number of guests than you expect comfortably, but not so large that the group will feel lost in the space. Make sure you choose a room that has the electrical outlets you need for your presentation equipment and for the number of television crews you expect.

In setting your space consider that the audience will need to feel close to the presenters, yet that there needs to be a clear distinction between the presenters or hosts of the event and the audience. If possible, an amphitheater is the best option as the acoustic conditions are best, cameramen can set up on several angles and the audience will feel included in the space. Otherwise the best option is to set up a regular room in the form of a classroom with a head table that faces the seats. Such a set up makes for good visuals of the presentation and will focus your audience's attention on the speakers. In this case, make sure to leave a wide path in the middle of the room between the chairs in which cameramen and photographers can move around. Avoid long banquet tables if possible because the journalists will focus on each other during the presentation and it will be difficult for cameramen and photographers to get good shots of your presentation.

## Technical considerations

Check the press room several hours before the event starts. Be sure that all the equipment is in order and technical needs are met. If using a podium, be sure that the podium is in the right position and in a solid color.

Blue is widely considered the best color for a backdrop, it has a calming effect on people and is good for television. Take any pictures off of the walls and remove any mirrors. Try to position your logo or the banner of the organization behind the podium where speakers will stand or the table you are from which you are presenting so that this is captured by television cameras and photographers. The logo might be placed near the microphone, and put near any charts that might be used.

### Double check



- ▶ That the speaker system is working (if needed).
- ▶ The microphone stand and roaming microphones are in order (if necessary and if available).
- ▶ That there are enough outlets for the TV lights.
- ▶ There is a table for sign-up and materials.

## Timing

It is very important to think about timing. In Macedonia, it is generally best to hold a press conference between 10.00 and 13.00. Otherwise you are taking the risk that the media will not cover it. Journalists in Macedonia usually begin work around 9.00 (except for radio staff). The print media have early afternoon deadlines. Try not to have your press conference at the same time as some other important event, or some other press conference. Check with a major news agency to see what other events might be happening at the same time.

## Duration

The duration of the press conference is very important. It shouldn't be longer than 45 minutes. Try to be focused on one issue and in the opening announcement set the ground rules and remind journalists that only questions relevant to your news event will be answered. That is not to say that you should not be prepared for the unexpected.

## Structure

Having a moderator helps keep the press conference on track. The moderator should introduce all participants by name, title, and organization (this should be given in writing to all media as well); control the timing of the presentations as well as the question and answer session; and manage the closing of the press conference.

**Opening:** The moderator or host welcomes the audience and introduces the speakers. Each person should be introduced with full name and title.

**Statements:** Statements should be short, clear, and concrete, and should not be longer than 15 minutes in total. Have the statements available in writing and in various languages if appropriate. Distribute them to the press at the end of the press conference.

**Questions:** Each journalist that asks a question should say the name and the name of the media organization that they represent. If a journalist is not only asking a question, but also trying to create some kind of dispute, try to avoid becoming involved in it.

**Closing:** The moderator or host should thank the audience and repeat the main message or information of the conference.

**TIPS:**

- ▶ Do not avoid answering questions.
- ▶ Never say I will give the answer and then don't give it.
- ▶ Do not use “no comment” or “I don't know.” If you are not prepared to give precise answers it is better to say “I will get you an answer before the end of the day”, and certainly do so.
- ▶ If presented with an off-topic question answer it, but then try to segue back to the main topic of the press conference.
- ▶ Don't forget that you are not only presenting yourself, but your organization.
- ▶ The first presenter should summarize the five “w”s in a short statement that will focus on three main points, and will be no longer than 5 minutes.
- ▶ Explain the rules in advance; how long the conference will take place, how much time there is for questions and answers and if one-on-one interviews can be given afterward (mainly for TV and radio who need specific sound bites for their reportage).
- ▶ Have a sign-in sheet for reporters to register upon arrival to your press conference. Ask for their name, title, organization and contact details (mobile, email, telephone, fax) which can be used to update your press database. This also helps you identify and contact those media organizations, which did attend. That gives you the possibility to contact them and to give them additional information, if you think it necessary.
- ▶ In most cases, there should not be more than two speakers at the press conference, and one expert on the topic.
- ▶ When distributing the announcement for the conference, think of the national press agencies. Most of them send out a list of the day's activities that are sent to their customers.

## TIME TABLE



### **One week before the press conference:**

- Check the room
- Reserve the podium, speaker system and microphones
- Design and produce the backdrop
- Produce media sign-up materials and information kits
- Send announcements by fax, mail or hand deliver to: editors, assignment desks, reporters, national wire service

### **One day before:**

- Formalize the order of speakers and who will say what
- Call all relevant media and urge their attendance
- Type up names and titles of spokespeople for media handout

### **That morning:**

- Double check the room several hours before
- Check all equipment and electrical set ups

### **During press conference:**

- Have a sign-up sheet for reporters' names and addresses
- Give out press kits (see media kit check list page 39)
- Hand out a written list of participants
- Make opening introductions
- Arrange one-on-one interviews if requested
- Audiotape the conference and make photos for internal use and publications

### **Follow up:**

- Send press kits to those who did not attend
- Call key reporters who did not attend, but don't be too aggressive
- Monitor and tape local coverage and clip newspaper coverage
- Compile clips and send to the organizational participants with a brief report as soon as possible



## Press briefings

Press briefings are a form of communication with the media, with the main purpose of keeping journalists themselves informed rather than directly informing the public through the journalist. They can also be used to provide deep background and information for follow-up stories. This can be an effective method of reaching reporters with story ideas and it is good opportunity for your staff to meet reporters.

Press briefings can be organized as closed press conferences, providing reporters with more detailed information than a press conference normally allows for without the cameras, photographers and microphones. They are often treated as informal communication with the media. Holding regular press briefings once a month might give the journalists information they can use for stories. Stories that come out of your press briefing may also support the efforts of your organization to get more representation in the media. Even if you do not organize them once a month, you can use them whenever you feel a need to update them on your accomplishments, inform them about the results of some research or initiative, or engage them on a issue of local importance.

Briefings are usually an excellent low-cost— organizationally and technically— way for your policy staff to meet reporters and exchange information and opinions. Consider organizing them outside of your office, at the location of project work or in conjunction with other partners, if appropriate. Just remember that although they are informal, nothing is “off the record.”

### ► How to organize a press briefing:

It is best if press briefings are organized in a conference room or large office space. Not all media are invited to every press briefing. Choose the most relevant ones for your issues, and invite 6-12 reporters. Have in mind that you should invite double the number you expect to attend and that some reporters will drop out at the last minute.



It is always useful to prepare written materials and background information. If you are holding regular briefings to update the media on your recent achievements and upcoming activities, prepare for the journalists copies of a newsletter if you have one (see Newsletters page 51), a schedule of upcoming events, and perhaps one page of achievements or a highlighted recent success. In other cases you are organizing a briefing to present certain information such as research results or strategic plans to provide journalists with background information on a local issue that you would like them to get more engaged in. In such cases you should prepare clear written reports that include the basic information you are presenting in not more than four pages, and give them copies of any charts, table or diagrams that you use. It also is useful to provide them with a list of other resource people or organizations that they could turn to for further information on the topic. Ask no more than three persons from your team to attend. A spokesperson and an expert should be present.

Moderating the discussion during the briefing will help your group and the invited journalists have a fruitful discussion, rather than an official presentation followed by questions. A moderator can also insure that no one single reporter is dominating the discussion.

#### A few days before . . .



- ▶ Reserve a conference room or large office
- ▶ Call and personally invite 6-12 reporters
- ▶ Confirm the spokesperson and experts (2-3 people)
- ▶ Develop your themes and major points
- ▶ Prepared written materials and background information

You will know that you have been successful if the journalists follow up on topics from the briefing and begin to report on the topics and investigate further. It will also be obvious if they continue to come to your briefings and begin to turn to your organization as a source even outside of the context of your briefings.

#### TIPS:



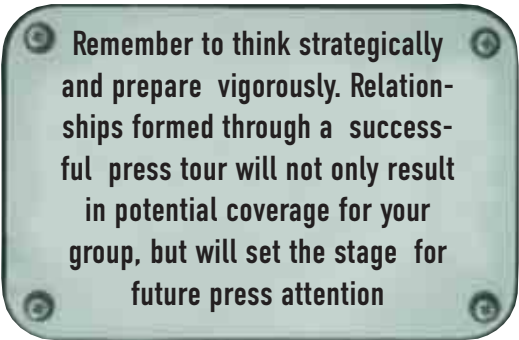
- ▶ During the briefing session introduce reporters to your speakers and to each other.
- ▶ Offer coffee, tea or soft drinks (not alcohol).
- ▶ Give everyone a chance to speak.
- ▶ Follow up with the reporters after the briefing.



## Press tours

A press tour for journalists from the local, national and even international media can be a very powerful tool to gain support and visibility for projects and programs. A successful press tour will help you to build stronger relationships with the media and give you time to better explain who you are and what your organization is really about.

One of the main purposes of press tours is to present successes or achievements in detail and/or to reveal the weaknesses and problems of projects and programs. They can visually prove your point. Organizing a press tour gives journalists access to your company or organization's executives and partners. They are designed to get your organization in front of selected, influential members of the press for face-to-face conversations that can increase the chances of positioning your organization for coverage in the media. Press tours can be organized as visits to several locations and activities and several different media can be involved.



**Remember to think strategically and prepare vigorously. Relationships formed through a successful press tour will not only result in potential coverage for your group, but will set the stage for future press attention**

### ► How to organize a press tour:

#### Before

1. As soon as you decide to initiate a press tour, make a list of all the media outlets that you want to target.
2. Plan who will be included in the event and what activities you want to highlight. Make sure to include those directly impacted by your work or those directly implementing your programs.

3. Choose a focus or main story for the tour as well as other related stories that can be human interest stories or stories of overcoming challenges during your work.
4. Identify which journalists are most appropriate for the event based on what they have written before or what kind of media they work for.
5. Finalize an agenda, transportation and refreshments for the visit.
6. Send invitations directly to the selected journalists and their editors. Request the names to be confirmed if accreditation is necessary.
7. Come up with a plan and criteria for accreditation if necessary. These are the usual procedures when high level dignitaries such as an ambassador or national politician are included in the event.
8. Follow up with the journalists by telephone to confirm their participation and make sure to note who is bringing cameramen or photographers as well.
9. Prepare information, background information, statistical information, booklets, brochures and other materials as appropriate.
10. Reconfirm the agenda with all the partners included and all transportation details.
11. Insure that you have enough translators for the appropriate languages. You will need one translator for every three journalists who speak one language.

## During

1. During transport to the site of the tour, give background materials to the group and be prepared to answer questions about what you will be showing them during the visit.
2. Have one of your partners or colleagues meet the group at each site in order to greet them and explain what they are seeing.
3. Record the reactions of the target audience and the environment with a camera or video recorder (if available).
4. Let the journalists and partners or beneficiaries talk freely to each other. This way they will learn why the various activities, products or projects are important and useful, what they mean for the community, how they deal with it, why it is significant.
5. Towards the end of the tour, give the journalists an additional information kit with exact names of locations, individuals and groups, any statistics you have on your theme or projects, brochures, photos etc., for the journalists to take home with them.
6. Upon your return to your office, don't forget to call and follow up with journalists to see if there are any remaining questions.



## TIPS:



- ▶ Remember that top journalists are often very busy, and have very unpredictable schedules, so when inviting them for a press tour try to be short and clear about the schedule of the tour and enthusiastic about their participation.
- ▶ In order to get these reporters out into the field, it is very likely that you will need to provide some appropriate incentive, for instance, a product demonstration, high level dignitaries, discussion of upcoming plans or a hard news story.
- ▶ Be ready to have an answer to the question: “Why should I meet with your company/organization now?”
- ▶ Keep in mind that a small group is better. Don’t have more than 25 people including cameramen and photographers.
- ▶ Be careful with the time and leave extra time in order to get from one meeting to the next.
- ▶ The best spokespeople for your work are the beneficiaries of your project. The story of their lives, their problems, their concerns and their appreciation of your work will make it into feature stories.
- ▶ Take time to brief your partners or beneficiaries in advance of a press tour. They may not have the experience with media that your organization does, so make sure they know what to expect, what the message is, what are some of the possible questions there may be, etc.
- ▶ Be sure journalists have all of the prepared materials with them during the tour and take them after the tour.
- ▶ Be honest about everything and don’t be afraid to expose problems or challenges you have had. Simply explain them and then talk about what is being done to overcome them.

## Media Kit Checklist



- ▶ Press release or statement with contact name and phone number
- ▶ Fact sheets on the issue(s)
- ▶ Quotes, comments, and endorsements with proper citations from politicians and other important supporters
- ▶ Press clippings about the issue
- ▶ Charts, graphs, photographs, or other visuals such as posters, fliers, product samples etc.
- ▶ Short biographies of key speakers
- ▶ One-page description of your group/ organization or project
- ▶ List of all participating coalition groups and contacts

## Case study:

# Making your work **VISIBLE**



## ► The media challenge

The Institute for the Development of Communities was founded in 2000 and works with rural communities across the country. They are about to complete their one hundredth project and are looking for ways to promote their organization's work and its mission. They now have a proven track record in their work and believe that they could get more communities involved if they could properly publicize the achievements of the communities with which they have worked. The Institute supports local initiatives for improving the standard of living in rural communities, by developing the capacity of residents to organize themselves, identify financial support and then implement the necessary changes. Their projects are equally divided among those that increase the conditions of or access to education facilities and those that improve conditions for income generation and employment.

## ► The response to the challenge

### Objective

The Institute's goal is to inform people about their work and to popularize the model they use for working with communities.

### Target

The target audience for the Institute's media campaign consists of rural populations across the country, which means they are trying to reach people from various ethnic groups and religions.



### Message

Communities can succeed at improving their own conditions and prospects and the Institute for the Development of Communities can help them do it.



### Tools

The Institute for the Development of Communities has a reasonably good budget for their media campaign, which is important since the nature of their target group means they have to engage national level media outlets.



**Press Tour:** The Institute decided to use the occasion of the one hundredth project to organize a field visit to the village in which the project is being implemented. They invited a select group of approximately 20 journalists from national media outlets and organized transportation from the capitol

city. The tour began with a visit to the now rehabilitated school, during which the journalists were given a chance to talk to some of the children who attend the school and to see a display of photographs of what the school looked like before. A village meeting followed the visit to the school, during which key members of the community explained the process through which they organized the school improvement project and found support for their work through the Institute. At the end of the tour the journalists received media kits that included a description of the Institute's goals and community engagement process, a list of all of their projects, photographs of the work being done on the school and the finished project, as well as two short stories about the impact of two other successful projects.

**Press Release:** Since it was not possible to invite more than 20 journalists on the tour, the Institute also sent out a press release announcing the completion of the one hundredth project and which briefly described the Institute's process for engaging communities. The press release gave information about the program to those who did not take part in the press tour.

**Press Briefings:** Using the contacts made through the press tour the Institute began to organize regular press briefings every month. They invite the journalists that have been covering their work and/or participated in the press tour. The press briefings are called Community Development Breakfasts and are held on Thursdays at 10:00 with coffee and pastries. At each briefing a different project is featured and the Institute brings in one or two key members of the community involved in the project. At each briefing, the spokesperson for the Institute goes over the process and the ways that other communities can get involved. The journalists that have been following the story also use these briefings to point out potential communities for the Institute to engage.

## ► Analysis of the response

### What was their challenge?

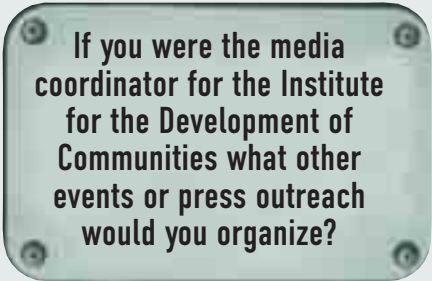
There are two main challenges in this case. The first is making sure that the journalists and thereby the audiences, truly understand the process that the Institute uses and the way in which they work. Since this campaign is about promoting a model and getting more communities interested in it, the model must be properly represented, to avoid speculation or unrealistic expectations. The second challenge is to get journalists from national level media outlets interested in stories from the rural parts of the country. Journalists in the big cities have little contact with rural areas, and also have little time or resources to travel to those parts of the country. They had to bring the journalists out there and bring the people from the rural communities into the city to meet with the journalists.

## What did they do right?

In both the press tour and the regular briefings the Institute attempted to give journalists as much direct contact as possible with the beneficiaries and partners in their project. This is always much more effective than having representatives from the organization explain why an activity or project is successful. The media generally want to hear the human interest stories from the communities impacted directly. It was also a useful tactic to maintain contacts with a consistent group of journalists. These journalists will be the ones who truly understand the process that they use and why it is important for communities. They can become additional advocates of the program.

## What else could they have done?

In addition to the somewhat informal briefings, they could have organized some more official interviews on talk shows or contact programs. The spokesperson and director of the Institute would have both made good interview subjects as well as perhaps some key members of communities in which they have worked successfully. Their tactics were focused almost exclusively on national media, but it would also be useful to visit local television and radio stations across the country to give interviews about the program.





# Interviews

There are different media and different types of interviews (newspaper, radio or television), but no matter who the interviewer is, the key principle is that you must always remain in control of the situation. Interviews give you an opportunity to clarify any misperceptions, clearly present your programs or positions, and make direct, positive contact with a broad audience.

Even if you are invited to speak about one issue, have in mind that journalists like surprises and they will always use the opportunity to ask you something else. That's why it is important to plan your media strategy in advance to decide what you want to achieve with the interview. Remember to "repeat, repeat, repeat" your message!

Most people get nervous when preparing for an interview. Don't expect the nervousness to disappear. Even very experienced people and reporters feel nervous and feel uncomfortable in front of the camera or in front of the media in general. The only way that can be ameliorated is to be as prepared as possible.

## ► How to give an interview:

**When asked for an interview, make sure to ask:**



- ▶ What is the date and time of the interview?
- ▶ Where will the interview be held?
- ▶ What is the full name of the interviewer (get familiar with their previous work)?
- ▶ Why are you chosen for the interview, what are the expectations?
- ▶ Will the interview be live or taped, by phone or in person?
- ▶ When will it be published or broadcast?
- ▶ How long is the interview expected to be?
- ▶ What section of the paper will the story run in or what program will the interview be used for?
- ▶ Will photos be taken?
- ▶ Are others being interviewed for the same publication? (if so, who)?
- ▶ Will you be able to get a copy of the article or program afterwards?

## Preparation

The golden rule is always to be well prepared. Think about what questions might be asked and prepare answers for them. Come up with the three most important points you want to make. These will be your “islands of safety”, that you will return to constantly during the interview.

Gather all the background materials you might need on your organization, company or project and assemble them in a way that makes them easy for you to reference. Have all background information, facts, statistics, but avoid using them too much. Numbers and figures are not very good for interviews. Outline some of the most important facts and figures on a single piece of paper that you can glance at during a break.

If you have any say as to where the interview takes place try to arrange for it to be done in the field at a site that is representative of your work or at an event that is taking place. For television it will help if you think about the camera angles ahead of time and what kind of action can be taking place in the background of the interview that illustrates your work. Always coordinate this with the journalist or producer prior to their arrival so that things can be set up accordingly.

## During the interview

Try to be colorful when you talk, meaning use interesting analogies or try to vary the tone of your voice, especially if you are interviewing on radio or television. While it is important that you have prepared well, don't memorize answers to questions or recite memorized material.

### What do I wear?



- ▶ Dress conservatively and comfortably.
- ▶ Wear solid colours, light but not white.
- ▶ Do not wear flashy, or shiny fabrics.
- ▶ Do not wear too much jewelry.
- ▶ Apply normal makeup.
- ▶ Don't be embarrassed to ask producers if you should wear something specific.

## TIPS:



- ▶ Do not be shy or hesitant.
- ▶ Stay calm, don't be easily ruffled by unexpected questions or rapid interviewing.
- ▶ Always tell the truth.
- ▶ Have all background information, facts, statistics, but don't use them too much.
- ▶ Be friendly and persuasive in your tone and body language, rather than stiff or monotone.
- ▶ Make certain that your audience feels that you are a person they like and trust.
- ▶ Don't be passive or overly polite.
- ▶ Be simple and direct.
- ▶ Turn off phones, especially mobiles.
- ▶ Don't use professional jargon. If you have to, explain the meaning.
- ▶ If you didn't hear a question, ask that it be repeated.
- ▶ Do not look at the camera if you are in the studio with the journalist, but when you give a statement or the journalist is not seen, then look into the camera directly.
- ▶ Be careful when you are talking into the microphone, try not to be too loud.
- ▶ If the reporter asks a question you don't want to answer: Try not to avoid answering questions, but if you get stuck, go back to the three main points you want to make. These are your "islands or safety" described earlier.
- ▶ If you are asked negative questions, do not repeat the negative. Do not get upset or defensive. Make clear any misinformation quickly and then go to your positive points.
- ▶ Remember to REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT your key message!

## Radio Talk Shows



Radio talk shows can be one of the most flexible media resources for NGOs and other organizations. They are relatively easy to access and offer a lot of time to present your views and communicate with a large audience.

To offer your story or spokesperson to a radio talk show:

- ▶ Prepare written materials (like a press kit) that offer an "angle" on a story or issue. Make sure the printed material is short.
- ▶ Suggest stories that are timely as well as important and appropriate: if it is a local radio station, make sure the story you want to talk about has a local angle.
- ▶ When you call the radio producer be prepared to make a very brief explanation of what you want to talk about.
- ▶ Handle rejection of your story idea gracefully. You want to be able to contact the producer again with other story ideas. Remember, "no" once does not mean "no" always.

Offer guests who are knowledgeable, have a conversational style, are able to turn their materials into brief bits of information and are fairly comfortable with the interview process.



# Pitch letter



Pitch letters are written proposals sent to encourage reporters and editors to cover specific news events or story ideas. They do not contain all the information about the story, but just enough to attract interest. The media receives several story proposals each day and pitch letters help attract attention to the issue you want to be covered. But, to achieve the main aim, pitch letters must be well written and brief. They must of course be followed up by direct contact with the targeted journalist or producer.

**Pitch letters serve on purpose - to pique the journalist's interest in your story.**

Pitch letters are particularly useful if you want to get someone from your organization on television or radio to talk about your work. Just as you write a press release to convince the press to cover an event you are having, you write a pitch letter to convince a producer (or editor) to interview someone from your organization or company to create a profile on your issue.

## ► How to write a pitch letter:

Address your letter to the producer or reporter you hope to interest. Try to address it to a specific person rather than using just a title. Start your letter with a paragraph that tells exactly why your story is interesting and important. Avoid using “must” or “should” for writing about a particular story or having a particular guest on the radio or TV programs. Follow the first paragraph with a short, concrete description of the story and details for contacting your organization's media coordinator. Follow up the pitch letter with a phone call the following day or, at the latest, the day after that.

### A pitch letter should be:

- ▶ No longer than one page.
- ▶ In the form of a letter.
- ▶ Creative and exciting.
- ▶ Direct and clear.
- ▶ Not the “whole story”.
- ▶ Followed up with a phone call.








## Media events

Your regular meetings and special events are ideal opportunities to bring in new members as well as attract local media coverage. Thorough planning and follow through are the keys to the success of these events.

Special events can help get your name and your organization's name in the news. Special events can include:

- 
- ▶ A celebration such as an anniversary,
  - ▶ The opening of a new office,
  - ▶ Announcing the beginning of a new program or a project,
  - ▶ Announcing accomplishments after completion of a particular project or program
  - ▶ An award presentation,
  - ▶ An annual program such as a scholarship award,
  - ▶ A fundraising event,
  - ▶ Sponsorship of a community event or benefit, or
  - ▶ A speech by a local celebrity or other noted personality.

Special events require strong organization and planning skills with strict attention to detail. You must make your media events attractive to the media. Four elements can increase the possibility of coverage of your event: interesting people, interesting places, interesting subjects, and good timing.

## ► How to organize a media event:

### People

The main ingredient in a successful meeting is a **good speaker**. Try to select guest speakers who are known to make interesting and engaging presentations. Build relationships with those people, involve them in your issue and don't hesitate to ask them to stand with you. The other type of person who is a magnet for the media is one who can provide the human-interest story. Be sure the person is likable or appealing figure who can present himself or herself well. Consider celebrity guests or public figures. They attract attention on their own but make sure they repeat your message and know the details of your project.

### Place

Whenever possible hold your event somewhere that will reflect your message. If, for example, you are addressing a lack of affordable housing, then go to empty public housing. Try to find a place where members of the press don't usually go, but be sure it is not so far that they cannot find it. Provide transportation if your budget allows.

When planning a press event always keep in mind what visual images you are making available to the media. Consider where your "photo opportunities" will be and what they will show. Make sure the pictures or footage you think they will be able to get in the place you have chosen are going to be dynamic, unobstructed, and connected to your message.

### Subject

Media events should be something out of the ordinary, events that do not happen every day. They should either be something new, such as a project launch or opening or entertaining such as a celebration or benefit event. Be as creative as possible in planning the event so as to make it unique and intriguing.

### Timing

Timing for a media event is critical to maximizing its potential. In Macedonia, if you want your event to make the evening news or the morning headline, the best times for an event are Tuesday through Thursday from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. Morning hours will guarantee that deadlines are met and will allow for further development of the story. However, if your event is a large social occasion such as an awards ceremony or a benefit concert, you will have to plan it for evening hours. Try to make sure that the evening you have chosen does not overlap with other large events already planned and generally avoid Monday nights. For such evening events you are more likely to get coverage in culture and entertainment programs or in the features sections of newspapers and magazines. This is an excellent way to diversify the type of coverage your organization gets.

## Preparation

**Setting up the event:** There should be a core group of people who work with your organization's media coordinator on setting up the event. This group will have to decide on the nature of the event and the location, secure the participation of any celebrities or other special guests, formalize the program, assist organization representatives or guests in writing their speeches, and prepare audiovisual presentations, if appropriate.

At the same time, someone from your organization will have to take care of the logistical arrangements. This means producing directional or promotional signs, arranging security and police authorizations if necessary, procuring refreshments or catering if required, and make any necessary travel and lodging reservations, etc.

### Getting the media there:

1. A press release announcing the event and inviting the media should be sent out 5-7 business days before the event so that the media will begin to announce it and include it in local events lists or cultural calendars. If the event is not in a well-known location, include travel directions.
2. A day or two before the event send a "media alert" to the editors/reporters who received the initial press release. The media alert is an abbreviated form of the press release described earlier that serves as a reminder on an upcoming event and can have the following format: Headline, purpose, speakers or program, where, when, photo/interview opportunities.
3. The day before the event, call the media to see who is planning to attend. For television media, let them know what visuals you can offer (e.g. celebrity interview, noted guests arriving).
4. If an interview with one of the speakers/guest is requested, set it up in advance and make sure it happens. (Notify the person to be interviewed to confirm availability and the topic to be discussed).
5. If a particular reporter or editor is unable to attend, offer to send a post-publicity press release.
6. Set up a "press table" and have all media sign an attendance sheet. This will help you develop contacts and track potential publicity.
7. A media kit should be available at the event and mailed to the media who did not attend. The kit should include the following items: a copy of the press release, a fact sheet on the history of the event or a backgrounder on you or your organization; photographs and biographies of the speakers, copies of speeches, comments and possibly small souvenir with your logo. (See Media Kit Checklist page 39)

### Ask yourself:

- ▶ What should the event be?
- ▶ Why should the media come?
- ▶ Who will attend?
- ▶ Who will speak?
- ▶ Who from the media should be invited?
- ▶ When should you invite speakers, media or other hosts?
- ▶ What you can do to promote it?
- ▶ What you can do to assure good media coverage?



## After

When your event is over, compile the press sign-in sheets and guest attendance book. Also, review with your colleagues what worked well and what did not and keep this in an “after action” report for reference when planning future events. Send thank-you notes to the speakers and other hosts. If it was a benefit also send thank-you notes to the attendees. You should also send notes to the reporters who gave you good coverage. Post-event contact will help strengthen your media relations and give you another chance to make a pitch.

### TIPS:



- ▶ Make sure that your press invitations include the people who cover your subject. Follow up by phone, if possible.
- ▶ Make sure you give enough advance notification time.
- ▶ Create an agenda or program schedule for your event. Make sure all involved know their itinerary and what is expected of them.
- ▶ Have your spokesperson ready and available to give interviews to reporters, to socialize with them and to make possible suggestions for special angles on stories that could promote your message.
- ▶ Try to visualize how the press will perceive your event. Make up newspaper headlines that you feel would be accurate descriptions. Try to look at the event from the reporter's eyes. If you find that the event might not generate the desired result, reorganize the event.
- ▶ Keep in touch with the speaker after he or she has agreed to make a presentation to your organization. Inform the speaker of the nature of the event, the schedule and what issues are on the agenda. Let the speaker know what the room looks like and what equipment is available for his/her use. Also request background information suitable for an introduction.
- ▶ Be sure to circulate a meeting announcement to the appropriate media well in advance, but not so far in advance that the announcement will be lost or discarded.
- ▶ Start your meeting on time and take care of necessary business promptly, allowing ample time for your speaker to present. When announcing your speaker, be sure to pronounce his or her name correctly.
- ▶ If there is to be a question and answer session to follow a presentation, it's a good idea to have someone screen the questions so they do not stray too far from the topic or become too narrowly defined. With larger audiences it helps to have a moderator repeat the questions so that everyone can hear.

Other

[8]

## ► Newsletters:

A newsletter is usually the most common tool used to communicate your message with the media and other target groups. A newsletter is a snapshot view of your organization and can be an effective way to promote and maintain your image. The newsletter has the logo prominently featured, an easily recognizable type or font and a look that is consistent from month to month. Newsletters can provide some advice, announce something new, and highlight certain events and activities. Their distribution to the media outlets provides reporters and editors with reasons to contact you and can fuel story ideas.

### Newsletters generally fall into three categories:

- Information about an organization, including their resources and activities,
- A strictly promotional newsletter,
- An educational newsletter.



### How to publish a newsletter:

#### Do

- Make the newsletter concise, timely and up to date.
- Target your audience and their level of expertise.
- Let the subject matter dictate the style and the length of your newsletter.
- Use a clear, readable font. You may want to mix fonts — but the end result should look clean and easy to follow. Remember to add eye appeal with small graphics, page headers, and of course photographs.
- Get experience writing in a journalistic style.

#### Don't

- Have a disorderly page — be sure to use a lot of white space to set off the text and graphics.
- Fill your newsletter with only one type of content — long, informative articles or short pieces. People will get frustrated if they always have to spend a lot of time reading it, or can never get enough information.
- Give up — your newsletter may not attract much attention at first, but if it is consistent people will begin to see it as a reference on which they can rely.

## Distribution:

Having a newsletter is one thing. Defining your target audience and distributing it properly and in a timely manner will make all the difference to its success and impact. Consider whether or not you need a printed version or if email and Internet make sense for your target group. Distribution also depends on your budget and how much you can spend on production and distribution.

## ► Letter to the editor

### Why write a letter to the editor?



- To explain how you think issues in the organization's work relate to other issues currently being covered in the news;
- To clarify the record on an issue after a misleading, inaccurate or biased letter or story;
- To respond to other editorials;
- To react to a news or feature story;
- To raise local public awareness of issues related to your work;
- To provide insight about activities not being adequately covered by your local newspaper;
- Most importantly, to express your thoughts and opinions; and
- Use your own words and be confident that your voice can make a difference.

## How to write a letter to the editor

All letters should be typed, if possible, or neatly written. They should be signed and include the author's work address and phone numbers. Newspapers often do not print letters from people they cannot reach to confirm authorship.

An effective format for a letter is: a topic paragraph, several paragraphs elaborating the writer's views, and a conclusion. This lets editors cut for space and still allows the message to get across.

Most newspapers typically suggest a length of 200-400 words for letters to the editor. Letters that are too long may be significantly cut or not placed at all.

Reference the article you are responding to in the letter's introduction. "I was astonished that the daily "Morning Star" May 12 article "Municipality to open new waste disposal site" omitted key facts on the issue of environmental protection..."



Try to keep the letter's tone calm and lively at the same time. Bland and dull letters, emotional outbursts, or personal attacks will not give readers a good impression of you or the organization you represent.

Do not make false or misleading statements. Be sure to verify facts and quoted material.

Timing is important. A letter has the best chance of being printed if the issue you are writing about has been in the news.

Give a local character to your letter to the editor by making reference to recognizable local institutions, events or common experiences. Find ways to make your issue closer to the people. When writing to the local media give local examples and anecdotes.

Keep to the point. Address one issue per letter.

Organize your letter logically. First, site the argument to which you are responding. Next, cite your own position. Then, present your evidence. At the end, close with a short restatement of your position or some memorable statement.

**NOTE:**

Letters to the editor can be used when you feel your organization has been misrepresented or that factual errors were made in the reporting of the newspaper. This is sometimes referred to as "demante." In such case, state clearly the mistake you think has been made and then the correct facts or your organization's version on the events or issue. Avoid accusations or condescending tones, simply inform them in a straightforward manner.

# Sample of a letter to the editor



Daily "Utrinski zrak"  
Street Partizanska 24/33  
Skopje

Dear editors,

Your April 27 editorial calling upon environmental and health organizations to be accurate regarding the factuality of their claims is a legitimate standard. It is also one that could be applied to the editorial itself.

Given your proper concern about factual accuracy, here are some facts to correct the inaccurate assertion of your opening sentence, which refers to "the discredited campaign to terrify the public about the air pollution".

Here is what has happened since the National Air Monitoring Agency released its report about the air pollution in a few towns in the country:

The National Air Monitoring Agency after a thorough review of all available data reaffirmed that the level of air pollution is above the average and it presents a serious threat to people's lives in those three towns.

The Agency reiterated that the continuation of the work of the factories in those three towns presented an "unreasonable" risk to human health and that the work of the factories should be prohibited.

The same conclusion was reached by the scientific experts who recently formed an association to consider this issue.

Last December the Faculty of Biology released a report, which reaffirmed the basic premise of the National Air Monitoring Agency report, namely that according to the measurements made the level of air pollution is above the acceptable levels.

I trust that these facts are authoritative enough for "Utrinski zrak" to set the record straight as to which side of the "air pollution" issue is "discredited".

Sincerely,  
Petar Bogoevski  
Executive Director  
Environmental Association "Healthy life"  
Mobile Telephone: 070 111 111  
Email: petar@petar.com





## Crisis communication

[1] Crisis communication

CASE STUDY: Communicating in a CRISIS





# Crisis communication



[1]

You should prepare a plan on how to deal with the media if a crisis hits. The crisis management plan should include who needs to be involved in internal decision-making, how to formulate a key message, a list of appropriate media outlets and names to contact, who should talk to the press, and when and how often to meet the press.

***Crisis situations can be:*** dealing with hostile media; disasters; bad reports about the reputation of the organization; or if your organization is involved in controversial issues, etc.

If you know that you are doing something that is perceived as controversial (e.g., organizing sex education in schools, undertaking activities against human trafficking etc.), organize the discussion yourself. That enables you to stay in control. Put an interview in the papers, on the radio or on TV, announce what you want to do and ask for reactions. Open your doors wide, be the first to announce what has happened, show commitment and report on what you have done. In other words: control the events before they control you.

Most of us are either regularly or occasionally dealing with hostile media. The reasons for the hostility need to be identified: media can be hostile towards you because they are not well informed and sometimes media are intentionally hostile to you. Some media are hostile to your work and your organization or purpose, because of the special interests of their owners, or other bias. In most cases, you are wasting your time trying to convince them. Evaluate whether or not it makes sense to give them an interview. Try to counteract them with positive coverage in other media.

### A few things to remember:



- ▶ Answer one question at a time;
- ▶ Pick the questions you want to answer;
- ▶ Finish your answers even if interrupted, use “as I was saying” to continue;
- ▶ Answer negative questions with positive words;
- ▶ Stick to real situations or events;
- ▶ DO NOT get caught in hypothetical “what if” discussions;
- ▶ Avoid accepting other people’s facts or figures, but do not get into an argument over their validity, simply say “I am not aware of those figures”, and remind the audience of the facts you present.



## Case study:

# Communicating in a CRISIS

## ► The media challenge

The Municipality of Misticva is in south central Macedonia and includes 10 villages and one small town of 30,000 people, Belugovo. The Mayor of the Municipality is from the Liberal Progressive Party, which is also the party currently in control of the national government. The municipal council is also dominated by this party, but only by a slim majority. Recently the municipality began building a new sports complex on the outskirts of town in order to stimulate commerce by attracting large sports and entertainment events. The town until now has suffered economically with the closing down of several large industries and unemployment is high. The Mayor and the municipal council are investing in the sports center as a way to help improve the economic situation because the area is known for its clean air and good climate, appropriate for sports, and there is a large tract of land that formerly was used by one of the large industries for storage and is now just an eyesore in the town.

Clearing of the site and construction began one month ago and two separate firms were hired to do the work, one for the clearing and another for the construction. Now, a month after the work began, the local media in Belugovo, which include one local television station, two radio stations and a small newspaper that comes out every two weeks, have started to carry stories accusing the municipality of corruption in the selection of the two companies working on the sports center. Both the Mayor and the municipal council have been implicated.

## ► The response to the challenge

### Objective

The municipal government's objective is to demonstrate to the public that there was not corruption in the tendering process and win back the confidence of the voters in Belugovo.

## Target

The target audience that the municipal leaders need to reach in their reaction to the crisis is the adult population of Belugovo and the surrounding area. This means it is a primarily rural population that is approximately 70 percent Macedonian and 25 percent Albanian with the remainder made up mostly of Roma and Turkish residents.



## Message

The process through which the firms were selected was fair and transparent as are all other decisions made by the municipal government.



## Tools

The municipality chose a few key tools to communicate their message to the public using the media at their disposal.



**Press tour:** Immediately after the stories began to appear the municipality invited journalist from all the local media to visit the municipality and the building site. The tour included: 1) an interview with the Mayor, 2) a visit to the financial department in the municipality, during which the person in charge of public procurement explained the procedures and showed the press the documentation for the sports center procurement, and 3) a visit to the building site to meet the representatives from the two firms and inspect the ongoing work.

**Interviews:** The mayor and members of the municipal council did not refuse interviews during this period, and made appearances on the television station and gave live interviews on the radio. Because the charges had been made against them as a whole they made every attempt to appear together during interviews. This did not mean all at once, but instead if the mayor gave an interview he would do it jointly with a council member from a different party and the council members made every attempt to appear in pairs. This way they could avoid party divisions that would deepen suspicions and widen divisions within the government.

## ► Analysis of the response

### What was their challenge?

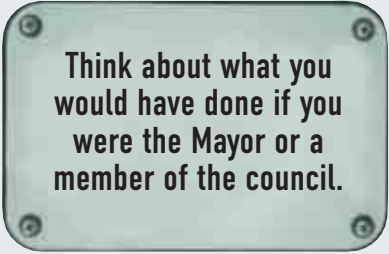
Accusations and scandal are popular with journalists and audience, but it is more difficult to get people to pay attention to the lack of scandal or a story when something is actually done right. The municipality had to do something above and beyond a normal press conference or press release to get the media to really concentrate on the story and message that the municipality wanted to communicate.

## What did they do right?

It was a good tactic to react immediately to the crisis in an open way. Because the issue was transparency, it was good that they did not shut their doors and avoid giving comments. The idea to invite the press to see the financial documentation is a good one for proving transparency because it is not just demonstrating that that particular instance was free of corruption, but also that the municipality is interested in being transparent in general.

## What else could they have done?

They could also have decided to hold a town hall meeting and invite the general public and the media. This would have taken some preparation, but would also have given the Mayor and council members a chance to come in to direct contact with their target audience. Another idea could have been to write a column or letter from the municipality for publishing in the local newspaper. However because the newspaper does not come out very often this would only have been useful if the paper was coming out soon, since this issue was urgent.



# IV

## Monitoring and evaluation

[1] Media content analysis

[2] Other evaluation tools





[1]

# Monitoring and evaluation

Too often time pressures leave you few opportunities to think about how effective your actions have been. So make sure your timetable includes some way to measure your effectiveness. You will want to do even better the next time. You worked hard to get media coverage. You sent out press releases, made follow-up calls, answered tough questions, and used some persuasion to get the media to appreciate your point of view. Then you got some hits — your name and your message is out there in print, on the air, and in cyberspace. But your job is not finished.

In order to evaluate your media strategy you need to monitor and review the coverage received. You need to find out how people understood your message or perceive your organization and what other impact did your campaign have. Did your message stand out clearly? If not, what issue dominated the media coverage and do you need to react? Always think about what you might change to improve upon your performance or strengthen your relations with the media. Ask people outside your organization to evaluate your publicity, too.

**There are several important reasons for monitoring media coverage.**



- ▶ To determine the impact of your media relations efforts.
- ▶ To identify misstatements and errors for correction.
- ▶ To identify those persons in the media who are most attuned to your issues.
- ▶ To replicate successful media strategies.
- ▶ To identify areas which need more media coverage.
- ▶ To compare your organization's position vis-a-vis others in the same field.

Monitoring coverage of your organization is one of the most important elements of a well-executed media strategy. Monitoring should be one of the day-to-day activities that are part of implementing your media plan. As described in the beginning of this book, your media strategy includes “measures of success,” which can serve as specific indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of your media strategy and plan. In addition there are five general indicators to consider when conducting an evaluation:



- 1. Media content analysis:** How has media coverage of your cause changed because of your initiative? Has there been more or less coverage of your organization. Is it more often positive or more often negative?
- 2. Shifts in public opinion:** Has there been a change in the way the public views your cause or organization?
- 3. Records of events:** Has the number of participants at your events increased?
- 4. Policy changes:** Has there been a significant policy change as a result of your initiative?
- 5. Change in your organization's participation:** Has there been an increase in your organization's membership?

Evaluation can often seem expensive and daunting, but there are often simple ways to gain feedback about your initiative. These tools will help measure the five indicators listed above, and can also be used to measure more specific indicators that are listed as your media strategy's "measures of success."

## ► Media content analysis

The first indicator, media content, can be measured by looking at the media coverage your organization or issue gets. This means: read, read, read and watch, watch, watch. It is important to read a vast array of newspapers and magazines, to watch the major television outlets, and listen to radio news programs in order to keep track of the amount and tone of news coverage about the issues your organization is promoting.

### Methods for tracking media coverage include:

- Clipping services (newspapers and magazines)
- Periodic review by staff of major dailies and weeklies
- Video and audio copies of electronic media coverage
- Run internet (online) searches for your organization or issue



### Media coverage is measured by:

- Quantity
  - Print = column centimeters of text/photographs.
  - Electronic = seconds/minutes of airtime.
- Circulation/Audience
  - Numbers of individuals reached.
  - Type of individuals reached (e.g., businesspersons, sports fans, women, young people).
- Placement
  - Where or when the story appeared.
  - How significant were any mentions of the organization, message or issue within the story or program.
- Quality of Content.



## REMEMBER!

- ▶ Always label your clippings with the source/name of newspaper, radio or television station, etc, with page number or name of program, and the date!
- ▶ Keep them organized and accessible!
- ▶ Make a database by topic, media outlet, date so you can find this info easily in the future.

It is also important to identify whether the coverage is generally positive, negative, or neutral; or, alternatively, whether the coverage is supportive or not supportive of the organization or coalition, its mission, goals and objectives.

In assessing the tone of the coverage, care must be taken to look at the story or program as a whole. It is easy to become so angered by a small error or misstatement that the good points of coverage are overlooked.

## ▶ Other evaluation tools

In order to evaluate the real impact of your media strategy it is necessary to go beyond clippings and media content analysis. Some of the other evaluation tools can be employed by your organization itself and others should be used in collaboration with outside consultants or specialized research firms.

In order to measure changes in your organization's participation levels and the attendance of your events it is simply important to keep good records. Maintain a database of the people involved in your activities or who attend regular meetings. You can have sign in lists at meetings or simply count the number of people at events. These can be press conferences or media events, or could be other events such as public budget hearings for municipalities or ecological clean-up actions. The most important thing to observe is a change in these numbers. If one of the objectives in your media strategy is to get more people involved in your activities through publicity you will want to see if there has been an increase in the number of participants since you began to implement the strategy. If not, you may want to readjust your media plan.

## NOTE:

When measuring indicators don't forget you are looking for change. Start your measuring before you begin to implement your media strategy so that you can tell if you have made a difference.

Another indicator that your organization can track for itself is policy change. If your organization works to affect policy of some kind, it is most likely that specific changes in national or local policy are included in the objectives in your media strategy. This means that one of your “measures of success” will be whether or not the changes your organization has been working for have been made. Tracking policy change requires a lot of reading, since in depth policy issues are most often covered in print media. Weekly magazines and editorial pages of newspapers are useful in following policy developments. It is also important to keep track of what laws are being discussed or enacted at the governmental level. A certain group of municipal leaders may be implementing a media strategy to pressure the government to change policy on the use of municipal public land. In that case they would track what leading opinion makers are saying about the subject in the press and what legal changes are happening in the government structures.

Measuring public opinion about your organization or the issues important to your organization often requires outside assistance. Measuring public opinion can be done through a variety of research methods. Research firms can be contracted to conduct public opinion surveys or polling. Individual consultants or state research institutes associated with universities or other public institutions can also be employed to undertake survey work. Make a judgement as to whether or not you have the capacity within your organization to conduct the research and whether or not the research will be perceived as more credible if it is conducted by a third party.

When planning public opinion research make sure of the following:

### Public Opinion Research

- ▶ Telephone polling
- ▶ Face to face surveys
- ▶ Focus group studies
- ▶ Interviews with key informants

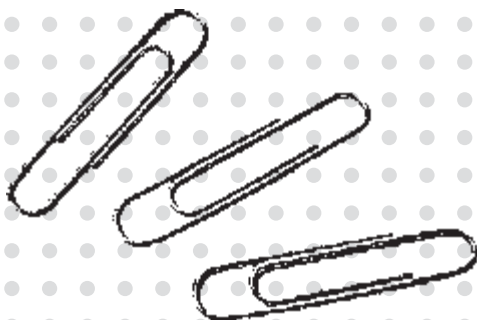


- ① Clearly identify what it is that you want to know. Develop a main research question and several follow up questions related to it. These should be related to your indicators and “measures of success.”
- ② Decide whether you are looking for quantitative or qualitative information. This may be decided in consultation with a third party if you are using one.
- ③ Describe your target group for the research, the group you want to gather information from. This should be related to the audience you targeted with your media strategy.
- ④ Establish a timeline for when you want the research to start and finish and by when you need the results.

V

## ANNEX

- [1] Code of journalists of Macedonia
- [2] Glossary of terms
- [3] Contact list of main media in Macedonia





# CODE

## OF JOURNALISTS OF MACEDONIA

[1]

### ► Principles of conduct

Freedom of the media is undeniable.

Main duty of the journalist is to respect the truth and right of the public to be informed, in accordance to Article 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

The journalists have a role of transmitters of information, ideas and opinions, and have a right to comment. By respecting the ethical virtues and professional standards regarding the presentation of information, the journalists shall be honest, objective and will report promptly.

Right and obligation of the journalists is to strive to prevent censorship and distortion of news.

Having in mind their role in the building of democracy and civic society, the journalists shall defend the human rights, dignity and freedom, shall respect the pluralism of ideas and opinions, shall contribute to strengthening of the legal state and shall participate in the control over the government and other subjects in the public life.

### ► Based on these principles and ethical values:

1. The journalists have right to free access to all sources of information that are of public interest.

The journalists shall publish correct, verified information and will not conceal essential information or forge documents.

If given information cannot be confirmed or if it is a matter of assumption, i.e. speculation, that should be noted and published.

Correctness of the information ought to be verified as much as possible.

2. If the journalist is prevented from coming to an information, he/she has the right to inform the public about that.
3. The journalist shall strive to provide publication of correction, denial or reply in cases when given information is found to be incorrect.
4. The journalist shall point out the source of information, but if the source demands to remain anonymous the journalist shall protect him.
5. The journalist shall respect the rule of law and will publish nothing that is on the contrary with the public interest.
6. The journalist must not use the media he/she works in for publication or concealing of information in order to gain personal benefit. Bribe, corruption and racketeering cannot be put in context with the journalistic profession.  
Influence from advertising and other commercial motives on the freedom of informing must not be allowed.  
There should be demarcation between advertising and journalistic text with illustration.
7. The journalist shall respect the privacy of every person, except in cases when that is on the contrary with the public interest.  
The journalist is obliged to respect the personal pain and grief.
8. The manner of informing in case of accident, elementary disaster, war, family tragedy, sickness, court procedures must be free from sensationalism.  
The principle of presumption of innocence, reporting for all involved parties in the legal dispute without suggesting verdict, will be applied when reporting on court procedures.
9. The journalist must not interview or photograph children under 16 years of age without agreement from the parents or legal guardians, unless that is in accordance to the children rights.  
The same refers to people with special needs, who are not able to decide rationally.
10. The journalists shall not consciously create or process information that jeopardize the human rights and freedoms, shall not use hate speech and shall not encourage discrimination of any sort (nationality, religion, sex, social class, language, sexual orientation, political orientation...)

- 11.** The journalist shall observe the general social standards of decency and shall respect the ethnic, cultural and religious differences in the Republic of Macedonia.
- 12.** Plagiarism is unacceptable.  
Quotes must not be used if the author or the source is not specified.
- 13.** The journalist ought to make distinction between facts and opinions, news and comments.
- 14.** Reporting on political processes, especially elections, must be impartial, balanced and fair.  
The journalist must make professional distance from the political subjects.
- 15.** The journalist must maintain the culture of speech and ethics.  
Impolite manner of communicating with the public is on the contrary with the journalistic profession.
- 16.** The journalist shall defend the reputation and dignity of his/hers profession, shall urge mutual solidarity and difference in opinions and will not misuse the media he/she works in for personal vendetta against other persons, including his colleagues.
- 17.** The journalist has the right to refuse a given task if that is on the contrary with the principles of this code.

## ► Final provisions

The journalists who work in accordance to this code enjoy support from their media outlets and professional organization.

In accordance to the Laws of the Republic of Macedonia, the journalists shall accept only the court of their colleagues regarding the profession and shall be free from political and other influence.

The Council of Honor is responsible for observing of the principles of this code.



# Glossary of terms

[2]

- ▶ **Angle** - Approach the reporter takes in writing the story.
- ▶ **Live Feed** - The term used in the media to refer to footage/film/tape of events as they happen.
- ▶ **Airtime** - The scheduled day or period of a broadcast; the length of a program or a segment, such as an interview.
- ▶ **Announcement** - A printed notice or a message during a broadcast.
- ▶ **Attribution** - Credit given to who said what or the source of facts.
- ▶ **Background** - (1) A part of a picture or a scene that appears in the distance; (2) Information that is not intended for publication; (3) Information that gives vital facts and/or the history of an organization or issue.
- ▶ **Banner** - A headline that extends across the page or screen.
- ▶ **Biased** - One-sided, rather than neutral or objective.
- ▶ **Block** - A group of consecutive time periods. Block programming is the scheduling of programs with similar audience appeal.
- ▶ **Breaking news** - A live, unfolding story or impending news; also called a breaking story.
- ▶ **Broadcast** - Transmission or duration of a program.
- ▶ **Byline** - Author's name given at the beginning or the end of an article.
- ▶ **Clip** - A short segment of a program. A story cut from a publication or a segment cut from a video or audiotape.



▶ **Closed question** - This type of question doesn't help an interviewee to open up. Closed questions usually prompt a person to answer with a simple "yes" or "no".

▶ **Coverage** - (1) Media treatment, the extent to which an event is reported; (2) (Broadcasting) the geographical area in which a station is received by viewers or listeners; (3) (Video) The photographing of a scene from various angles.

▶ **Credit** - Acknowledging the source for a given fact.

▶ **Deadline** - The time when editors of newspaper, magazine or other media outlet expect an article to be submitted.

▶ **Disinformation** - Giving incorrect information about a subject.

▶ **Editor** - A person who edits material for publication or broadcast.

▶ **Eye contact** - The practice of looking a person in the eyes. In film and TV eye contact is achieved by looking directly into the camera.

▶ **Editorial** - Newspaper articles giving the newspaper's opinions on the main stories of the day.

▶ **Feature** - A feature takes an in-depth look at what is going on behind the news. It gets into the lives of people. It tries to explain why and how a trend developed. Unlike news, a feature does not have to be tied to a current event or a breaking story. But, it can grow out of something that is reported in the news.

▶ **Five W's and one H** - The primary questions a news story answers - Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

▶ **Headline** - The title or description at the top of a news release, or article. They may be short, eye-catching and dramatic.

▶ **Human interest** - A feature about a personality, a story with colorful details and emotional appeal; any work that is not strictly hard news.

▶ **Jargon** - Language used by members of a specific group, company or industry.

▶ **Lead** - The first sentence or first few sentences of a story.

▶ **Letters to the editor** - Your opportunity to congratulate, discuss or criticize an article that you have read.

▶ **Media relations** - The function of gaining positive media attention and coverage.

▶ **News** - Fresh information.

▶ **News angle** - Aspects or details of a feature story that pegs it to a news event or gives it news value for the reader.

▶ **On the air** - A broadcast in progress.

▶ **Open mike** - A live microphone. A microphone that is turned on.

▶ **Off the record** - This is what people say when they want the information they tell you to go unmentioned in a story or broadcast report. This means that they do not want their names or quotes to be repeated to anyone or printed in your story.

▶ **Open-ended questions** - These questions encourage the person to talk and share their thoughts and feelings on a subject. It allows them to tell their own story without much prompting from the reporter.

▶ **Pitching** - Encouraging the media to report on a story. A pitch letter is often used to encourage coverage of a feature or other story that may require additional motivation.

▶ **Press kit** - A collection of related information to provide the media with background on a particular organization or event.

▶ **Press release** - An information sheet sent out by organizations to newspapers, television and radio news editors. The aim is to get the news team interested in covering the story.

▶ **Press conference** - An arranged gathering of media representatives to announce and explain a significant and newsworthy subject or event.

▶ **Press tour** - Scheduled press appearances in a series of cities or locations.

▶ **Pyramid story structure** - Journalistic style of writing where the most important information is written first, followed by information of decreasing importance (this allows the reader to stop reading having gained the most important information; it also allows editors to cut or edit the story from the bottom up without omitting vital information).

▶ **Reporter** - A person who gathers news and other journalistic materials and writes or broadcasts it.

▶ **Soft news** - Stories that are interesting, but less important than hard news (very problematic definition!), focusing on people as well as facts and information and includes interviews, reviews, articles and editorials.

▶ **Sound bite** - A short phrase or piece of dialogue either cut from an interview or repeated by a spokesperson. A 15-second sound bite is common in radio newscasts.

▶ **Source** - A person, written article, book, song, video or film from where information comes from.

▶ **Special event** - An activity arranged for the purpose of generating publicity.

▶ **Talking head** - A person shown merely speaking, presented in a dull or unimaginative way.

▶ **Target audience** - A specific group of people that media producers want to reach.

▶ **Tracking** - Monitoring of media coverage.



# Contact list of main media in Macedonia



# [3]

## 1. Macedonian Informative Agency

(MIA)

"Bojmija" 2  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 2461-600  
Fax: + 389 2 2464-048  
e-mail: mia@mia.com.mk

## 2. Makfaks (newsagency)

"Goce Delcev" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3110-125  
fax: + 389 2 3110-184  
e-mail: makfax@unet.com.mk

## 3. Macedonian Radio-Television

(MRTV)

"Goce Delcev" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3112-200,  
+ 389 2 3214-566  
fax: + 389 2 3214-577  
e-mail: mkrtvcor@mt.net.mk

## 4. Nova Makedonija (daily)

"Mito Hadzivasilev Jasmin" b.b.  
tel: + 389 2 3116-366  
e-mail: contact@novamakedonia.com.mk

## 5. Vecer (daily)

"Mito Hadzivasilev Jasmin" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3111-537, + 389 2 3111-103  
e-mail: vecer@mt.net.mk

## Flaka

(daily on Albanian language)

"Mito Hadzivasilev Jasmin" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3112-025,  
+ 389 2 3225-612  
e-mail: flaka@mol.com.mk

## Birlik

(newspaper on Turkish language)

"Mito Hadzivasilev Jasmina" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3111-146  
fax: + 389 2 3225-560  
e-mail: birlik@mt.net.mk

## Fakti

(daily on Albanian language)

Shopping Center "Treska", Skopje  
1000 Skopje  
Tel/fax: +389 2 2628-424  
e-mail: fakti@on.net.mk

## Television: A1

"Pero Nakov" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 2550-350  
fax: + 389 2 2551-970;  
+ 389 2 2550-330  
e-mail: a1tv@a1.com.mk

## Television Sitel

"Gradski stadion" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3116-566  
fax: + 389 2 3214-898  
e-mail: sitel@unet.com.mk

**Television: Kanal 5**

"Skupi" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3091-551;  
+ 389 2 3091-560  
fax: + 389 2 3091-571  
e-mail: kanal5@kanal5.com.mk  
<http://www.kanal5.com.mk>

**Television: Era**

"Cairska" 38a  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3136-553;  
+ 389 2 3237-087  
fax: + 389 2 3136-553  
e-mail: tvera@era.com.mk  
[www.era.com.mk](http://www.era.com.mk)

**TV Telma**

"Nikola Parapunov" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3076-677;  
+ 389 2 3066-653  
fax: + 389 2 3077-269  
e-mail: telma@unet.com.mk

**TV Sutel**

"Suto Orizari" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 2651-351;  
+ 389 2 2650-133  
fax: + 389 2 2651-235  
e-mail: tvsutel@mol.com.mk  
<http://www.sutel.com.mk>

**TV Orbis**

"Borka Levata" b.b., Riecka 7a  
Bitola  
tel: + 389 47 228-790;  
+ 389 47 225-790  
fax: + 389 47 225-790  
e-mail: orbis@mt.net.mk

**TV Tera**

"Ruza Delceva" b.b.  
Bitola  
tel: + 389 47 258-080  
fax: + 389 47 258-090  
e-mail: tera@tera.com.mk

**TV Zdravkin**

"Dimce Mircev" 1  
Veles  
tel: + 389 43 212-900;  
+ 389 43 212-901  
fax: + 389 43 232-900  
e-mail: tvzdrav@freemail.org.mk

**TV Vis**

"Sando Masev" 12  
tel: + 389 34 348-111  
fax: + 389 34 347-111  
e-mail: kanal-vis@yahoo.com

**TV Art**

"Ohridska" 18  
Tetovo  
tel: + 389 44 331-585  
fax: + 389 44 331-586  
e-mail: tvart@soros.org.mk

**TV Kiss**

"B.Toska" 10  
Tetovo  
tel: + 389 44 334-565;  
+ 389 44 334-566  
fax: + 389 44 334-565  
e-mail: kiss@sonet.com.mk

**TV Iris**

"Marsal Tito" b.b. Stip  
tel: + 389 32 391-313;  
+ 389 32 380-513  
fax: + 389 32 391-313  
e-mail: iris@iris.com.mk

**Radio Noma**

"M.H. Jasmin" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3112-694;  
+ 389 2 3111-878  
fax: + 389 2 3112-794  
e-mail: noma@unet.com.mk

**Radio Vat**

"Vanco Mickov" 17b  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3063-080;  
+ 389 2 3063-086  
fax: + 389 2 3063-086;  
+ 389 2 3074-625  
e-mail: info@vati.com.mk  
www.vati.com.mk

**Super radio**

"Makedonski prosvetiteli" b.b. Ohrid  
tel: + 389 46 260-078;  
+ 389 46 266-277  
fax: + 389 46 260-353  
e-mail: superradio@superradio.com.mk  
www.superradio.com.mk

**Radio Kanal77**

Ruzveltova 4/6  
1000 Skopje  
tel/fax: + 389 2 3223-122/3223-123  
e-mail: kanal77\_sk@sonet.com.mk

**Radio Kanal 77**

"Josif Kovacev" 18  
Stip  
tel: + 389 32 397-727  
fax: + 389 32 397-717  
e-mail: kanal77@kanal77.com.mk

**Radio Kiss**

"Blagoja Toska" 10 Tetovo  
tel: + 389 44 334-566  
fax: + 389 44 334-565  
e-mail: kiss@sonet.com.mk

**Radio Bleta**

"Ilindenska" 2/5 Tetovo  
tel: + 389 44 32-323;  
+ 389 44 335-064  
fax: + 389 44 32-323  
e-mail: radioblea@yahoo.com

**Dnevnik (daily)**

"Teodosij Gologanov" 28  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3297-555  
fax: + 389 2 3297-554  
e-mail: dnevnik@unet.com.mk

**Utrinski Vesnik (daily)**

"Dame Gruev" 5  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3117-377  
fax: + 389 2 3118-638  
e-mail: vesnik@utrinski.com.mk

**Vest (daily)**

"Plostad Makedonija" b.b.  
tel: + 389 2 3296-505  
fax: + 389 2 3296-505  
e-mail: vest@vest.com.mk

**Makedonija Denes (daily)**

"Mito Hadzivasilev - Jasmin" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3227-270  
fax: + 389 2 3110-150  
e-mail: denes@unet.com.mk

**Kapital (weekly)**

"Belasica" b.b.  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3139-750;  
+ 389 2 3139-406  
fax: + 389 2 3109-632  
e-mail: kapital@kapital.com.mk

**Forum**

"Kosta Novakovic" 16  
1000 Skopje  
tel/fax: + 389 2 3121-100  
e-mail: info@forum.com.mk  
forum@unet.com.mk  
www.forum.com.mk

**Fokus (weekly)**

"Marsal Tito" 5/10  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3111-327  
fax: + 3223-679  
e-mail: focus@unet.com.mk

**Zum (weekly)**

"DTC Bunjakovec" second floor - 14  
tel: + 389 2 3225-126  
fax: + 389 2 3225-129  
e-mail: zum@unet.com.mk

**Lobi (weekly)**

“Nikola Tesla” 18/2-8  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3090-586  
fax: + 389 2 3130-407

**Aktuel (weekly)**

“Leptokarija” section 1 - 10a  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3064-233;  
+ 389 2 3064-293  
fax: + 389 2 3090-108  
e-mail: aktuel@unet.com.mk

**Denes (weekly)**

“M.H. Jasmin” 50  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3227-270  
fax: + 389 2 3110-150  
e-mail: denes@unet.com.mk

**Makedonsko Vreme**

“Vasil Gjorgov” 39/7  
1000 Skopje  
tel/fax: + 389 2 3121-128  
e-mail: mian@mian.com.mk

**Makedonsko Sonce**

“Leninova” 79  
tel: + 389 2 3130-137  
fax: + 389 2 3130-377  
e-mail: urednik@makedonskosonce.com

**Start (weekly)**

“Metropolit Teodosij Gologanov” 126  
1000 Skopje  
tel: + 389 2 3214-220  
fax: + 389 2 3112-279  
e-mail: starts@unet.com.mk  
http: www.start.com.mk



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International Organization for Migration